



Rural Economic Development Playbook

Updated October 2020

Executive Summary

Prepared in Collaboration with Sevier County, Six County AOG (SCAOG), Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments (SEUALG), the Utah Association of Counties (UAC) and work initially catalyzed by the Governor's Rural Partnership Board (GRPB)

Proposed Areas of Action

I. Consolidating Operations and Programs at the State Level

One of the consistent pieces of feedback that our team has heard in work across rural Utah has been the confusing nature of having multiple agencies, boards, approval processes, and timelines related to economic development. Our proposal is to bring all of those agencies together to best determine how GOED, GRPB, OED, and others consolidate operations and programs at a state level, while empowering regional and local governments to take on a more active role. With these organizations working together, we see an opportunity for their to be 1 board at the state level that:

- Approves and reviews Incentives
- Reviews requests for funding, such as SB95
- Advises on policy
- Oversees tools to further private investment

II. Fund Regional Partnerships

Regional Partnerships, primarily with the seven AOG's across the state and the counties, have been a vital aspect of the measurable success that has been seen since the creation of the UAC Regional Growth Program. Both SCAOG and SEUALG have used federal funding to create internal positions to provide economic development services to their respective counties, and they have also entered into a contractual relationship with UAC to act as technical experts to their staff and members. If the state were to transfer programmatic responsibilities to the 5 rural AOGs and provide funding for this work, it would amplify this model and bring services and expertise to each region.

III. Retool Incentives

Economic development incentives in the state have typically fallen into a few verticals: EDTIF, IAF, HCITC, Rural Incentives, TIF, Regional/Local RLF. The tools have been created to provide opportunities throughout the state to attract employment and capital investment. There are several new realities in the economy (i.e. COVID, full/over employment, changing capital markets, etc.), which requires a retooling of the economic development incentives, on a state and regional level. Suggested retoolings are:

- Amending the EDTIF - Scaling wage % and job # by County Class

expansion of transportation investment tools, it will drive improved transit outcomes for the state.

V. Workforce Development and Housing

A major limitation for growth with the state is available workforce and housing stock. This fact is very evident in the Intermountain Electronics (IE) project, and the efforts to address these issues have shown the need for regional collaboration. SEUALG has been an integral partner in bringing USU Eastern into the effort to design a training program and employee pipeline for IE. They have also convened the development community to begin housing development to create new inventory in the market.

VI. Provide Support for Small Businesses & Entrepreneurship

The tools outlined in Section III would play a role in this, including aggregating revolving loan funds and state-backed incentives to private investors, but other aspects that would include:

- Entrepreneurship training/programming with partners like Silicon Slopes, Kauffman Foundation
- Work with regional funding bodies, such as EDA-backed revolving loan funds, to create products and pipelines of small business to
- Coordinate with existing funders such as local CRA banks, seed funds, and business incubators
- Conduct small business needs assessment statewide- leverage work from CARES Act and other COVID relief to launch response to small business needs and funding gap